

# Always Crashing in the Same Ballard

The sky was the colour of a television tuned to a live news channel.

I had salvaged most of the Martian tripod war machine and had mounted the Ministry of Truth surveillance telescreen onto the front. Taking a dose of Soma I climbed into the driving compartment. The controls were strange, designed by triadic tentacles for the use of triadic tentacles. No matter. I would manage somehow.

“Arigato kawaii daikaiju!!” I cried, as I succeeded in starting the otherworldly motor. The tripod legs stumbling about like Bambi. In my improvised metal monster I lurched forward and began, with increasing confidence, to traverse the landscape of broken fictions. On the far horizon Kong wrestled with Godzilla. The Deathstar fragmented and fell from the sky to crash into The Dark Tower.

I took some more Soma. I was wearing the Halloween costume I had stolen as I exited, naked and exhausted, from the most recent “orgy-porgy”. My next date would be less fun. I was on course to confront the Man in the High Castle and defeat him for the honour and glory of the Hundred Acre Wood and Toad Hall.

Sometimes a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.

Suddenly a huge dark shape loomed up in front of me. It was The Iron Giant with Fungus in the driving seat! Damn! Jemima had blabbed the whole plan to anyone who was willing to buy her a platter of escargot sushi. Damn that blasted Puddleduck!

It was too late. Before I had time to react my tripod war machine was crashing into the advancing Iron Giant. With a horrendous screeeeeeeech and kerrrrrang of twisting metal and the shattered glass of cloning fluid units we collided.

My giant structure stumbled against the other giant structure. Alien engineering twisted around Earthly engineering. The two enormous constructions forming a weird distorted new form with its own language of despair as cloning fluid spurted through fragments of penetrated plexiglass. It was strangely erotic.

In my Martian machine I crashed down, down to the earth below, in wild embrace with the Bogeyman's Giant. It was too late. We were fused into a public synthetic form of beautiful-ugly-crash-bump-clang-wrench-span-driven-pinpointed emplacement.

Rauschenberg had won!